

August 29, 2017

Rio Grande National Forest  
Forest Plan Revision  
1803 US Hwy. 150  
Monte Vista, CO 81132

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept the enclosed petition sponsored by the Citizens Alliance of Northern New Mexico concerning protection of the headwaters of the Chama Basin. We are submitting both 153 online electronic signatures and 147 handwritten signatures for a total of 300 signatures in support of protecting the water source for Chama and many downstream residents.

We request that the US Forest Service designate the Chama Basin Watershed Protection Area, as proposed in the attached petition and map, to be included in the revision of the Rio Grande National Forest land management plan.

Local and state residents use the Chama Basin area for both motorized and non-motorized trails, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, herb gathering, grazing and other activities. It is important that all these activities are allowed to continue at their present level but managed using Best Management Practices to minimize impact to riparian areas and the watershed. It is important that this area remain open to the public.

We are concerned about potential oil and gas, and mineral development in the Chama Basin. These activities could endanger the water resources in the area and impact the Village of Chama's drinking water and other communities along the Chama River. We commend the Rio Grande National Forest for acquiring the mineral rights of the Chama Basin in 2011 that consolidated surface and mineral rights. We encourage the Forest Service to take the next steps by finding the area unsuitable for oil and gas leasing, and mineral material sales and make the area "discretionary no lease" (DNL) for watershed protection purposes.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comment and petition on the Rio Grande National Forest Plan. Please keep us informed on the progress of the Forest Plan and the Chama Basin area.

Sincerely,

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CC: Andrea Jones, District Ranger, Conejos Peak Ranger District

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